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# Undergraduate Research Highlight: Mississippi College

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Undergraduate research at Mississippi College has its roots in the Honors Program. For over forty years, top students in all departments have had the opportunity to participate in a three-semester Honors Research Project with a faculty mentor. These projects culminate in an Honors Thesis and recognition at graduation. In the last ten years, undergraduate research at MC has grown to include a greater number of students; four departments have led the way in these efforts.

The Communication Department requires a research class for all of their undergraduate majors and, from this course, selects students to present their work at the Mississippi Communication Association Annual Meeting. In addition, many other communication classes utilize research, including their senior capstone course, which requires the compilation of a research portfolio.

Several professors in the Department of Biological Sciences direct student research projects. Research emphases include ecological genetics, systematic entomology, and mitochondrial genomics. In 1994, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute awarded the department a one million dollar grant, which allowed the acquisition of quality equipment, which continues to aid their research today.

The degree requirements in the Psychology Department include a strong research component. In addition to research projects directed by individual professors, the department



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maintains a fish laboratory, which is utilized by students in two courses. Students present their research each year at the Southeast Psychological Association Conference and the Mississippi Psychological Association Conference.

Perhaps the most successful inclusion of undergraduates into ongoing research projects occurs in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Students in the Computational Chemistry Group, Molecular Biophysics Group, and Structural Chemistry Group present their research at numerous local, regional, and national conferences each year. At the annual Undergraduate Chemistry Research Conference at the University of Memphis, an MC student has won one of the top awards each of the last five years.

In the last two years, efforts have been made to expand the successes of these four departments to the rest of the institution. Last year, MC had its own Undergraduate Research Symposium, which included students from seven departments. This year, MC will join with Tougaloo College for the first TC/MC Undergraduate Research Symposium that will be held April 15 and 16 at Tougaloo.